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BOOKS PLUS

In the bugging business

SECRECY AND DEMOCRACY: The CIA in Transition
By Stansfield Turner.
Sidgwick & Jackson. 304 pages. £12.95. Available from Houghton Mifflin.

Turner has tales to tell

Admiral Stansfield Turner always thought big. When he was in the American navy he was often accused—not always wrongly—of being more concerned with "tomorrow's navy" than with today's. He never got to the top of it; instead, President Carter shunted him off to the CIA.

It was predictable that, in writing about his time there, he should try to do several things at once. He tells fascinating tales of his experiences as director of the CIA and as director of central intelligence (DCI), the job of co-ordinating all the American intelligence agencies. (The two jobs have gone together ever since the CIA was established.) But he also grapples with two other vital issues: how to deal with the cumbersome American intelligence organisation; and how to reconcile the secrecy and ethics of intelligence work with the democratic ideal.

The story of his appointment and disappointments as President Carter's intelligence chief is probably the best account yet written of the inner workings of the intelligence organisation of a world power. If Mr Turner does not reveal everything the reader might want to know (he was hamstrung not only by legitimate security restraints, but by the requirement to clear his text with the present CIA, which appears to have introduced some illegitimate ones as well), he tells much more than any of his predecessors. The story of the wrongheaded treatment of a Russian defector by Mr James Angleton, who was for years a power in the CIA, has been partly told before, but Mr Turner's account is more powerful—and interesting—both because of its basis in fact and the straight talk that has always been his trademark.

Mr Turner had his share of problems with colleagues from other intelligence organisations. Partly these were professional disagreements, such as the perennial dispute between the "classic" school of intelligence, which believes that diligent research and spies still have their uses, and the electronic operators, who are mostly convinced that nothing [illegible] from technical methods of collecting information matters any more. Within the CIA, the intelligence collectors and clandestine-operations people had almost always overshadowed the analysts.

Having an analytical mind himself, Mr Turner tried to change this pattern in order to achieve a better finished product. One step towards this end was the famous 1977 "Hallowe'en massacre", in which he cut some 820 jobs from the espionage branch. It has been widely criticised as having "wrecked" the agency. However, long before he arrived, the CIA was believed to be hugely overstaffed. He says that the espionage branch in particular was so top-heavy that many good young men were leaving because they could not see their way to the top, and so overmanned at all levels that on returning from overseas assignments many agents had to "walk the corridors" for months looking for something to do.

Although 820 was the number of authorised jobs that were cut, only 164 people were forced out (most of them pensioned off); of these, only 17 were fired. And few know how big the CIA was to start with: 164 may have been a fairly small percent[illegible]

efficient when they are cut, and the CIA was probably no exception. The main objection (for which the author must and does take responsibility) was the callous, bureaucratic way in which notifications were made.

Outside the CIA, his troubles were mainly due to the turf-fights resulting from America's over-complicated national intelligence organisation. Each military service has its own intelligence branch; the Pentagon has another for the defence department as a whole; the State Department has one; the FBI chases foreign spies; the air force runs the office that controls the reconnaissance satellites; the National Security Agency engages in electronic eavesdropping and tries to break codes; the CIA produces spies and "national" intelligence. And its boss is supposed not only to run it, but to co-ordinate its operations with those of all the other organisations as well, although he has little authority over them. Mercy!

Needless to say, there is too little co-ordination. By and large, the individual agencies go their own ways, and the system creaks along: co-operation is mainly a matter of horse-trading punctuated by compromise. To solve part of this problem, Mr Turner outlines a specific plan for the job of DCI to be hived off from that of director of the CIA. It is not a new idea, but it is so sensible that it is hard to fathom why it has not been done.

The author writes best about the theoretical discussion of the ethics, mechanics and politics of congressional supervision: the means by which the legislature, and through it, the body politic, maintain some sort of control over the CIA. He is clear that this kind of oversight is good not only for the country but for the intelligence organisations themselves. Nevertheless, he appears a bit uncertain when he comes to grips with the most vexed problem of all: how much to tell the overseers.

BALTIMORE SUN
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NOT SO COVERT AID

Advertising doesn't mix with secret operations

By Allan E. Goodman

Washington

On Feb. 26, many newspapers published a picture of the vice president, the secretaries of state and defense, and other key White House officials looking on as President Reagan signed a message to Congress requesting authorization to use $100 million of Defense Department funds for a covert action. The president wants the money to buy arms and material for the rebel forces fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. As part of his campaign to convince a skeptical Congress to release the funds, Mr. Reagan received rebel leaders in the Oval Office, and a private group, the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, plans to spend more than $1 million for television advertising to support the "contras."

Such publicity about covert action would have been considered a serious breach of security, a national scandal, as recently as a decade ago.

From 1947, when the Central Intelligence Agency was created, to the mid-1970s, covert action was a tightly held state secret, authorized by a handful of officials operating in back rooms at the White House and the CIA, through a process that concealed the president's involvement. But in the United States today, covert action is neither very covert nor something that the president or the government as a whole can plausibly deny. By law, the president must personally issue a finding that each covert action is in the national interest, and so notify Congress.

When President Reagan reorganized the U.S. intelligence community in 1981 and issued the executive order which now governs its activities, covert action was defined as activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives abroad which are planned and executed so that the role of the U.S. government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly.

In 1985, however, the concern with whether the hand of the United States should be concealed began to disappear. In President Reagan's State of the Union message that year, he called for support of "freedom fighters" defying Soviet-supported aggression. Shortly thereafter, senior administration spokesmen called openly for covert military and economic aid to anti-communist guerrillas in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola and Cambodia. Such aid is seen by the administration as an essential ingredient of a strategy to combat aggression and to counter the activities of such states as Nicaragua, Cuba, Libya and Iran, which export revolution and subversion.

As Secretary of State George P. Shultz argued in a speech last December, effective resistance to Soviet influence sometimes requires that the U.S. government help freedom fighters without open acknowledgement. But the administration has grown increasingly open about its willingness to finance covert action and the propriety of doing so.

Overt covert action, however, is self-defeating. Effective covert action really does require concealing American involvement and support.

Secrecy is vital for two reasons. First, it protects the U.S. government if the covert action should fail. Second, it protects the recipients of the aid from the charge that they are merely puppets of a foreign power and, thereby, are as illegitimate as the alleged puppet governments or dictators they are seeking to overthrow.

Consider, for example, what would have happened if the new president of the Philippines, Corazon C. Aquino, had been a recipient of U.S. covert aid and this had somehow become public. If the leak had occurred before the Filipino election, Mrs. Aquino might have been discredited as a candidate, and American interests might have become even more vulnerable to pressure from supporters of Ferdinand E. Marcos, who would have been outraged. If such covert aid had been revealed after her victory, she would almost certainly be compelled now to act more coolly toward the United States to prove the legitimacy of her government and her own independence.

By going public on many of its covert action programs, the Reagan administration tarnishes the American image abroad and weakens the public appeal of those it supports who — unlike the "contras," who have engaged in grizzly reprisals against their prisoners and civilians — may be admirable freedom fighters.

Many intelligence professionals disagree with both the present cavalier attitude toward revealing covert action and the extent to which the administration has turned to such activity to bolster its foreign policy objectives. When Adm. Stansfield Turner became director of central intelligence in 1977, he found "the majority of espionage professionals . . . believed that covert action had brought more harm and criticism to the CIA than useful return."

Most professionals contend that covert action is a risky weapon and should be considered only when all other options have been exhausted. "But the trouble with Reagan and [CIA Director William J. Casey]," one told me in an interview, "is that they look at covert action as just another option. It's on the table from the beginning. And the

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National academy to assess potential for 'psychwars'

By Ed Rogers
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The prestigious National Academy of Sciences is checking into hordes of published claims that research being done for the CIA and the Pentagon could lead to psychic spying and mind warfare.

Believers in the paranormal claim that certain people, called "psychics," can see objects beyond the normal vision range, through "clairvoyance," and move objects by mental power, through "psychokinetics."

For more than a decade, newspapers, magazines and books have claimed the government is spending "millions of dollars" on research into occult phenomena that make the exotic "star wars" technology look tame.

These reports claimed that psychic espionage and weapons operated by the power of the mind are on the verge of reality.

The most spectacular of these reports claimed a "psychic" used in research for the CIA in 1972 by the Stanford Research Institute, now SRI International, was able to describe Soviet military bases by clairvoyance, or so-called "remote viewing."

Throughout the years, skeptical scientists have tried to spread doubts about the claims. They repeatedly challenged the 1972 "remote viewing" report on the ground that the results could not be verified by independent investigators.

The skeptics also have challenged even the idea that the government is committed in a major way. But they have not been able to squelch the "psychwar" fad.

A year ago former CIA Director Stansfield Turner disclosed that the agency had, in fact, sponsored "remote viewing" research when Vice President George Bush was the CIA director.

"Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't," he said, adding that during his term as director, the CIA watched developments in this country and "tried to monitor the Soviet Union's research."

The CIA will not say what it is doing now, but a spokesman commented: "We obviously have to keep track of what the Soviets, hostile powers, are doing in that area."

Robert Morris, former president of The Parapsychological Association, said he welcomes any attempt to add objective information about the field, but declined in an interview to comment on any of the investigation reports.

"I've had a policy in general of not really commenting," he said. "I'm reluctant to become identified with a fixed concrete position. I think that's really the most appropriate."

Mr. Morris, formerly senior research scientist for the school of computer and information science at Syracuse University, has now accepted an appointment to the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology at the University of Edinburg.

The skeptics are not optimistic that even the National Academy of Sciences investigation will end the controversy any more than a negative Air Force report in 1969 dispelled belief in flying saucers.

Philip J. Klass, a senior Aviation Week research editor whose hobby is debunking UFOs and the claims of other paranormal cults, warned that the academy's study is "fraught with pitfalls."

"Considering the broad scope of the assignment and the limited time and resources available, I very much doubt that it will come up with a definitive answer to whether psychic phenomena do or do not exist," Mr. Klass said.

The national academy's two-year review is being conducted by a new "Committee On Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance," which will operate under the academy's Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences.

David A. Goslin, executive director of the commission, said as a spoof on the parapsychologists that the Pentagon has already developed "a wholly different approach to remote viewing — it's called 'satellite.' "

"However," he said, "I'm certainly not going to try to prejudge what our committee is going to conclude. The committee has an open mind. This is not a witch hunt. It is not a debunking exercise."

In reviewing claims made for research into paranormal powers, Mr. Goslin said, the 14 scientists chosen to conduct the review will be asking this question: "Is there any reasonable scientific underpinning?"

The committee's review of parapsychology research will be only one part of a review of all available techniques for the "enhancement of human performance," he said.

Psychologists are studying the learning process by playing records to a sleeping person, inducing deep concentration and other methods, including biofeedback — the effort to gain conscious control of blood pressure, brain activity and other body functions.

The committee consists of "distinguished scientists" whose disciplines include psysiological psychology, learning-behavior studies, statististics evaluation research, sociology and social psychology, Mr. Goslin said.

Daniel Druckman, who took over as project director last September, said the scientists have divided themselves into "study groups" and are visiting research sites and reviewing academic literature of their assigned subjects.

The study groups are to report their findings by June 1987, Mr. Druckman said.

"We are in the process of looking closely at various research going on in parapsychology in key laboratories around the country," Mr. Druckman said. "I don't want this thing to get sensationalized. It's not that sort of a study."

Asked if the government is financing any of the research, Mr. Druckman said, "None that I know of."

The review is being financed by a two-year, $453,000 contract with the Army Research Institute, which is seeking "validated, promising avenues for application to personnel training, assignment and operation."

One of the national academy scientists is Ray Hyman, a University of Oregon psychology professor, who said he is concerned about the outlandish claims that are being made in published reports about pseudoscience research.

"The stuff that seems to get emphasized is stuff that even parapsychologists are alarmed at in the sense that it is very far out," he said in an interview.

"I'm a little hesitant to tell them [military agencies] not to look at it at all," Mr. Hyman said. "If you put yourself in the shoes of the military people, they've got to hedge their bets, I suppose."